Public beliefs and attitudes about schizophrenia, major depression and psychotropic medication in Tunisia
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BACKGROUND

- Stigmatization associated with mental illnesses could prevent schizophrenic and people with major depression to access to healthcare.

OBJECTIVES

- The objective of current study is to describe public beliefs and attitudes about schizophrenia, major depression and psychotropic drugs in Tunisia:
  - to investigate attitudes towards people suffering from these disorders, i.e., emotional reactions, stereotypes and behavioural intentions prevailing among public
  - to identify possible misconceptions about psychotropic medication

METHODS

- A face-to-face survey involving Tunisian adult population was conducted. Participants were presented with a questionnaire on schizophrenia, major depression or psychotropic medication. They were asked about personal attitudes and illness beliefs.
- Survey on schizophrenia and major depression (833 respondents):
  - A description of a case (schizophrenia male character, schizophrenia female character, major depression male character, major depression female character) was presented to respondents
  - Only one of the 4 versions of the questionnaire was presented to each respondent
- Survey on psychotropic drugs (205 respondents):
  - One unique questionnaire was created

RESULTS

- All results are presented in Figures below.

**Figure 1.** Comparison between schizophrenia and major depression characters

**Figure 2.** Psychotropic medication

CONCLUSIONS

- This study suggests that stigmatization around schizophrenia and major depression is present in Tunisia. The public is willing to help mental disease patients, and acknowledges the relevance of investing in mental health to reduce the enormous associated costs that burden individuals, families and societies.
- This stigmatization contributes to marginalize patients, exclude them from health care management and affects their disease severity.